MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)

SUBJECT: Response to United States Air Force Comments on Drug Demand Reduction Threat in Afghanistan

Thank you for your comments and the time you took to meet with me to discuss the draft Department Drug Demand Reduction Policy – Response to the Threat in the Central Command Theaters. I appreciate your valuable insights and have considered your response. There are a few things I would like to address.

While the U.S. Air Force has an excellent program, DoD has a long standing policy to do random drug testing of Service members world-wide and we do not believe exceptions can be made for individual Service branches. This is a deterrence program and should be proactive. It is our policy to anticipate problems, not wait until we have one. Given the unique Afghan situation, combined with the ops tempo of our forces' deployments, we believe the testing program to be necessary.

I also would like to address your comments on the baggage inspection prior to departure from overseas bases proposal. I am sure you are aware that it is a requirement pursuant to Department of Transportation Regulation, Part V, "DoD Customs and Border Clearance Policy and Procedures" Chapter 506, Section E. Our reference (now deleted) to this requirement in the proposed testing policy was just a reminder.

Finally, responding to your statement that your thinking was in step with your sister services, based on formal coordination comments and subsequent discussions, it is my understanding that the Navy and the Joint staff have concurred with the policy. We are working with the Army to address their concerns.

Again, thank you for your comments, and please let me know if the Air Force is willing to make any modifications to the draft as we discussed.

for Mary Beth Long
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for
Counternarcotics